

**METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR TEMPORARILY MAINTAINING
A DOWNHOLE FOAM ELEMENT IN A COMPRESSED STATE**

ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to a degradable wrap and method for temporarily maintaining a downhole foam element in a compressed state. The degradable wrap is fitted around the foam element and temporarily maintains the foam element in a compressed state against an outer surface of a downhole sand control device. It is provided to keep the foam element in the compressed state while a production assembly comprising the downhole sand control device and foam element mounted thereon is placed downhole in a well bore adjacent to a production zone. The degradable wrap is permeable to the production fluid and degrades over time. Once the degradable wrap has degraded the foam element fills the annulus between the production screen and casing string or well bore wall. The foam element acts to inhibit the flow of water along the annulus and is useful in zone isolation.